

Claim 14, line 1, delete "any preceding claim" and replace with -- claim 1 --;  
Claim 15, line 1, delete "any preceding claim" and replace with -- claim 1 --;  
Claim 16, line 1, delete "any of the preceding claims" and replace with  
-- claim 1 --;  
Claim 17, lines 1-2, delete "any one of the preceding claims is made" and replace  
with -- claim 1 --;

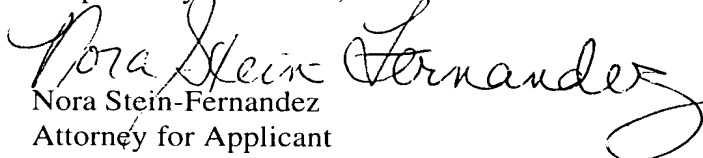
**REMARKS**

This Preliminary Amendment is being made upon entry of International Application No. PCT/99/05582 into the U.S. national phase of prosecution. Claims 3, 5-8, 10-11 and 13-17 that were annexed to the International Preliminary Examination report have been amended to comply with proper U.S. claim format.

An Information Disclosure Statement accompanies this Preliminary Amendment. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider and make of record the documents cited therein and that a copy of the form PTO-1449, appropriately initialed by the Examiner, be returned to Applicant's attorney.

In view of the foregoing, favorable consideration of the amended claims, early examination on the merits and allowance of this application are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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